

THE LONDON CO-OPERATIVE MAGAZINE. NEW SERIES.

No. I, Vol. IV.]

JANUARY 1, 1830.

[PRICE 6d.

ADDRESS.

AT the commencement of a new year and of a New Series of our Magazine, we deem it expedient to address our Readers upon the progress which our cause has made during the last year, and to urge upon our friends by every consideration of duty and humanity, the necessity of continual exertion on their part, for the accomplishment of our most holy wish, the amelioration of human society. In surveying the year that has just passed, we find abundant motives for rejoicing at the advancement which the cause of Co-operation has made, both in our own country and in other nations of the world. The Trading Associations, the stepping stones as it were to co-operation among the working classes, have spread rapidly in almost every direction, and are daily multiplying: and whatever difference of opinion may prevail as to their ultimate success, an unanimity of sentiment must exist with regard to their instrumentality in diffusing a knowledge of the principles of the social system, and in eliciting a powerful interest in favour of united interests over individual competition. The present num-
VOL. IV.

ber of these associations in England, is, we believe, above one hundred, and several are at this very moment in the act of formation. Some few of the principal ones publish their own little magazines or miscellanies, among which the Brighton and the Birmingham "Co-operator" rank deservedly high. It is a delightful thing to find a spirit of inquiry as to the cause and cure of their misfortunes, manifesting itself among the working classes. It is a subject full of deep interest and importance, to witness that gradual ascension in the scale of intelligence and moral power which the working classes are achieving. Thanks to the general liberality of the age, thanks to Mechanics' Institutions, and every other means of diffusing knowledge among the labouring part of the people, the true equalizing principle has been set in action; the principle which will raise up the poor, and the low, and the ignorant, to a level with the rich, the great, and the intelligent; not depress the latter to a level with the former. And this work of equalization must be attended in its progress; as well as be crowned in its result, with unmixed good—yes with good, even to those

B

who through ignorance endeavour to oppose its progress ; for the moment society is disburthened of its poverty, its degradedness, and its ignorance ; then truly will its misery, its depravity, and its crime, cease to be, while happiness, intelligence, and virtue shall celestialize the Earth.

At New York, our friends in the cause of justice and humanity, write us word that they are advancing with an energy and a rapidity, which they hope will animate their friends in England to resort to similar measures for the promulgation of true knowledge.

Mr. Robert Dale Owen, in a letter dated New York, 26th October, 1829, says, " We are doing great things in this western hemisphere. The cause of liberty and liberality is making rapid strides : every day adds to the number of our friends and supporters, and to the popularity of the cause itself. It was but last night, that I lectured in our hall of science (which seats about 1200 persons) to an audience that not only filled the body of the house, but aisles, galleries, entrances, and indeed, wherever standing room could be found. Frances Wright lectured the Sunday before, and hundreds went away unable even to approach the doors. The *Free Inquirer* increases every week in circulation. It had about 350 subscribers six or eight months ago, and now it has 1200." Miss Wright has delivered lectures to crowded and attentive audiences in several of the great cities of the United States, Philadelphia, New York, Cincinnati, &c. &c. It may be said indeed of America, that

she is rapidly preparing for the new system.

With regard to our own country, such are the accumulated difficulties arising from the augmented power of production, and the consequent diminution in the value of almost every species of human occupation, along with the unprofitable employment of capital, that a general expectation prevails of a considerable, not to say entire change of system.

In another part of our columns will be found considerable extracts from the *Quarterly Review*, one of the most influential and powerful periodical works of the country, in whose pages the co-operative system has found a partial advocacy, and where the urgent necessity of some great change in the present state of the working population is stated with clearness, force, and eloquence. This fact certainly forms an important feature in the progress of our system, and although we are not quite satisfied with the way in which the reviewer has treated the subject, we hail with considerable joy the boldness and bravery with which the writer has handled the question.

The *Athæneum* also, a weekly work of considerable merit, appears to us occasionally to lean towards the system. Dr. Southey too, whose early predilections for community of property and equality of rights and duties are well known, has lately given the system of co-operation (with some few modifications), his warm and honest-hearted support. The "*Colloquies on the progress and prospects of society*" (a review of which we

shall give in another number), notwithstanding the morbid feeling which pervades the work, of giving to possible evils a certain probability ; notwithstanding, also, we fear, the imperfect acquaintance which its intelligent author possesses of co-operation, contain many admissions as to the importance and good effects of union among the working classes, upon the basis of mutual assistance. We have, indeed,

then, cause to congratulate ourselves on the progress of the new views ; and with the knowledge of what has been done before our eyes, let us put our shoulders to the wheel, confident that an union of powers will accomplish all that we desire, if it be guided by wisdom, sustained by moral feeling, and accompanied by unwearied perseverance.

R.

REPLY TO THE SUPPOSED FAILURE OF CO-OPERATION.

We are perpetually reminded of the necessity of entering into explanations of the first principles of the social system, and of the proceedings of Mr. Owen, by the misconceptions that generally prevail with those who have bestowed a slight attention only upon the subject of co-operation ; we therefore trust that we shall stand excused with the better informed of our readers, in entering upon a brief elucidation, which might otherwise be deemed superfluous. When we have first introduced the subject to some parties, it is discovered that they, as well as a multitude of other travellers, have visited New Lanark, and beheld Mr. Owen's system ; conceiving that Mr. Owen intended to establish nothing but cotton manufactures, or to teach the children of the useful classes to dance quadrilles.

All that Mr. Owen attempted at New Lanark he fully accomplished. He proved, that by ameliorating the condition of the people they

would exhibit an improved character. Without undervaluing preceptive instruction, he contended that that alone was insufficient ; that the surrounding circumstances of each individual, had, in spite of the wisest precepts, a powerful influence in moulding the character ; and that unless they were in harmony with scholastic discipline and parental advice, there would be a counteraction destructive of the objects of education. The circumstances of a cotton mill are perhaps the least favourable to the formation of a moral character ; nevertheless, if he could so far improve those circumstances as to generate a superior general character to that found in other cotton manufactories, it was sufficient to establish his principle and attract the attention of the public. The abolition of public houses, the establishment of public stores, the profits of which were applied to the formation of schools for the children of those who purchased their articles at those stores,

were all calculated, as may be readily supposed without entering into unnecessary details, to effect this object. But the object of the co-operative system is the production of a general character superior to any before known; and how is this to be effected? Simply by combining those circumstances alone that conduce to excellence, and which combination is made under the guidance of experience derived from the past history of mankind.

The failure, real or supposed, of Mr. Owen in his experiment at New Harmony, is not unfrequently adduced as evidence of the impracticability of the scheme. As well might it be contended, that because a tradesman fails, that there are no sound principles of business that would ensure prosperity and success. The perfection of the social system (in using the word perfection we mean the outline or general principles of combination) can be exhibited only by individuals who have been trained from their earliest years in a community; and as its commencement is attended with the disadvantage of having for its members those who have been trained in principles totally opposite, it is the more necessary that the greatest circumspection should be observed in selecting the best individuals that can be found, those of the most intelligence and of the most friendly dispositions.

Now it appears that when New Harmony was purchased, nearly one thousand persons, men, women, and children, were admitted, almost indiscriminately, with little or no reference to

character. Of course it may be supposed that the destitute and profligate would be there in considerable force. Whether this admission was from necessity, inadvertence, or with the hope of reclaiming the bad, we know not; but it is obvious that it must have increased the difficulties of the managers considerably. Soon after the town was filled, Mr. Owen was compelled by his arrangements to return to England, and this heterogeneous mass was left without the aid of his guidance for twelve months. On his return he found the community in much disorder; and in consequence of the introduction of a few designing characters, some of whom they have not even yet got rid of, the establishment has not been organized agreeably to Mr. Owen's original intentions. His own opinions upon this point may be gathered from the following extract from his address at the Franklin Institute in the city of Philadelphia, June 27, 1827.

"Mr. Owen then said, that experience had shown an inconvenience in the hasty formation of societies from materials so very incoherent, as must necessarily be presented by the assemblage of numerous individuals from remote districts of country, all bringing with them their local habits and prejudices, that their views would be too discordant to produce harmony at once. It was therefore desirable, that individuals should, previous to their uniting in societies, know each other, and be satisfied that they have a uniformity of views and sentiments; that they have full confidence in each other, and that they at

first unite in small numbers. All that is necessary is honesty of purpose, and that they unite in so small numbers as to be able to comprehend the practical effect of all their operations. And when these individuals have, by associating together, become familiar with the necessary rules

and regulations, they may then add to their number individual after individual, of those who may be found suitable for the purpose, and who are willing to unite under the arrangement and present state of the society."—*New Harmony Gazette*, p. 347.

ON TRADING ASSOCIATIONS.

OF all the co-adjutive societies or associations for mutual assistance and benefit, which are at this moment in existence, none we think are calculated to produce so much immediate and permanent good, or to work out so great a change in the social condition of the working classes, as the trading associations. We do not mean to say, that these institutions will of themselves necessarily lead to the desirable results described above, but that if established upon proper principles and conducted in a proper manner, they will afford to the working classes a means by which they may gradually emancipate themselves from their present pitiable condition. The working classes should remember, that much of their own improvement, as well intellectual as moral, depends upon themselves; and each member of that class should bear constantly in mind, that while they continue to be wanting in the principles and practice of morality they will remain degraded; that as long as they continue to be the victims of drunkenness and indolence, *with their own consent*, choosing rather to extinguish

thought in the intoxicating dram than endeavour to amend their condition, they will remain poor, imbecile, and wretched. The good then which trading associations are likely as a means to produce, will be mainly owing to the ardour, sincerity, and honesty with which the working classes shall be actuated towards their own elevation. The friends of the working classes cannot do better at this time, than impress upon their consideration, firstly, that a means has been discovered, by a judicious employment of which, poverty, and the fear of poverty, may be banished; and secondly, that the means will be effectual or ineffectual, exactly in proportion to the sincerity of the desire for amelioration, which they may possess. No man with either a clear head or a pure heart can look out from his own private circle into the great mass of population, which makes up this immense city, without perceiving at once, that some mighty cause must be at work to produce the quantity of squalid wretchedness which at every turn meets his eye. Let him pass on to any of the great ma-

manufacturing towns, which are emphatically called the "workshops" of this extraordinary country, and more and more poverty, and misery, and abject want will present themselves to his notice. Let him search the parochial books, the accounts of money expended for the support of this deplorable mass of pauperised human beings, and he will there find, that from seven to eight millions sterling are annually expended for the maintenance of two classes of people, those who cannot get any work at all whereby to earn a trifling pittance, and those, who although they can obtain work, and in many instances most laborious work indeed it is they do obtain, cannot nevertheless earn sufficient wages to support themselves and families. With such facts before him, a man must be blind indeed not to see, that in consequence of the extraordinary facility with which the majority of manufactured articles are now produced by the aid of machinery, together with the immense cheapness of machine labour compared with human labour; the working classes are being regularly and rapidly deprived of the only possible means left them of earning their bread. They are being hourly driven out of the market of labour, and pauperism, moral degradation, and crime, are the too constant and necessary results of a system, in which machinery is made to compete with human labour, to depress the wages of industrious artizans, and to deprive of the means of subsistence a portion (and that not a small one) of the very class of men who produce

the whole wealth of the country. Let us not be understood in this stricture upon machinery, either to condemn the use of scientific power, or to charge with cold-heartedness and cruelty those master manufacturers who have employed mechanical labour to the disadvantage of human beings. We mean to do no such thing; for in the first place, as regards machinery, we are of opinion that few blessings so great have been awarded to man, as such a compendium of labour, as such a means of saving human exertion and time, as machinery undoubtedly is. And in the second place, as respects the owners and employers of machinery, our firm and conscientious opinion is, that the competition which pervades every class of men (and always will, so long as individual interest is separated from social well-being) has driven the manufacturers themselves to the use of such an expedient, as necessarily as it has injured the working classes; and that indeed, had they not resorted to the employment of scientific power, they also would have been brought to absolute ruin.

The fault then, the error, lies neither with machinery itself, which must ever be a blessing, nor with master manufacturers, who are as truly victims to the principle of competition as the labourers; but entirely in the present fabric of Society, in consequence of which every man is compelled (with the most trifling exceptions) to pursue his own welfare more frequently in opposition to the well-being of his fellow man than in harmony with it. The fault is attributable to

no man — no body of men — the evil results exclusively from the imperfect arrangements of society, which having originated in ignorance partake necessarily of error.

To remedy this evil is the great point of consideration. To find some method whereby the working classes may cease to be the suffering victims of brute matter (for however beautifully organized, still, compared with the expansibilities of the human mind, machinery remains brute matter) is becoming daily more and more the anxious thought of feeling hearts. The government of the country, we know on good authority, is employed in the consideration of this subject, and both the higher and middle classes are beginning to feel the necessity of some speedy alteration. Without disparaging the efforts of the great, we are anxious that they, for whom something must ere long be done, would begin to do something for themselves, as well for the sake of their immediate benefit, as to evince to the legislature that they are not dead to a sense of their depressed condition, but are striving by all good and wise methods to amend it. Now, trading associations appear to us to be at present the best and most worthy objects of their adoption and support; and as such we propose to delineate in a few lines the principles upon which they ought to be founded, and we understand with great satisfaction are founded in many parts of England. The object of a trading association is briefly this: to furnish most of the articles of food and ordinary consumption to its members at less prices

than each member would be obliged to give at retail shops; and to accumulate a fund for the purpose of renting land for cultivation, and the formation thereon of a co-operative community. The manner in which an association of this nature is conducted is generally as follows: it consists of a number of workmen, the more numerous the better, who are in constant employment, who out of their weekly wages pay into the hands of a treasurer a stipulated sum, say two shillings a week each; with the weekly total of which one of their body purchases at *wholesale* prices tea and sugar, and bread, shoes, hats, or whatever article may be determined upon among themselves; each member will then be entitled to purchase whatever he pleases at a price considerably beneath the retail charge, but not quite so low as the article was originally purchased for, inasmuch as they agree to pay a certain per-centage on the cost, which is paid into the hands of the treasurer, to accumulate and to form the grand fund upon which, their hopes as to their ultimate emancipation from the necessity of competitive labour depends. When we consider what mighty changes the universal adoption of this mode of expending their money, will produce among the working classes, and its effects on all the other branches of society, we seem to behold as at a distance, and indistinctly, a mighty engine, a moral lever of extraordinary power, which must inevitably greatly modify the entire fabric of society. As to the consequences, which sooner or later

must result from the adoption of trading associations among the working classes, we entertain not the least dread; on the contrary, we think that better and happier moulds of society would ensue. We would press, however, upon the attention of all classes of men the urgent necessity of exerting every influence towards the moral elevation of the great body of the working members of society; and upon the attention of the labourers themselves, that both for

their immediate and future benefit; for the good condition of themselves, their wives, and helpless children; for their subsistence, comfort, and happiness, it is their interest and duty to live soberly and honestly. We would tell them, that it is as immutable and inexorable a law of nature, that distress and misery should follow in the steps of intoxication, as that comfort and happiness should attend sobriety.
C. R.

LABOURING CLASSES IN GERMANY.

MR. LOUDON, the intelligent agriculturist, in his Magazine of Natural History, after having stated that in Wurtembergh, Bavaria, and Baden, the great majority of the population are occupiers in perpetuity of a portion of the soil, remarks, "This state of things is far from being favourable to what is called money-making, but it is highly favourable to health and contentment. It is a great deal for a poor man to have something which he can call his own; something on which he can bestow his labour, and from which he can in consequence extract enjoyment. The absolute necessities of life are few, and derived directly from the soil; the labouring man therefore, who has a house and a few roods of land, is certain of a home and food; he increases the interest of his home by a wife; and parental care and solicitude, with connubial and filial attachment, fill up the measure of his happiness. These are the essential

purposes and enjoyments of life which nature intended for all men; which the poor man can enjoy as well as the rich; and for which no other enjoyment, either of the rich and the poor, the wise or the learned, can entirely compensate."

Now all this, and more than all this, will be the necessary and constant companion of every human being, the moment co-operation is made the basis of society. In a community of persons perfectly equal in all social rights, with no vested power over partitions of land, and with no privileges of rank or order, with those diversities alone of intellectual character which are the results of diversified organization of mind and body, every human being will be at once intelligent, virtuous, and happy. And those purposes, and those enjoyments of life, "which nature intended for all," will be by all accomplished and enjoyed, to the exclusion and injury of none.

THE QUARTERLY REVIEW, ON CO-OPERATION.

Quarterly Review, No. 82.

It is with no inconsiderable pleasure that we present to our readers some considerable extracts from the above-named work, relative to trading associations and their probable effect upon the condition of the labouring classes. It is unfortunately no every-day occurrence, for the rights and happiness of the people to find in the pages of this lofty-toned periodical, an able and judicious advocacy; we therefore hail with the greater delight, from its infrequency, the article to which we now allude. And at the same time that we receive this peace-offering to the galled feelings of millions, as both a compensation for the past and a foretaste of what is to come, we cannot help believing that the increased and increasing liberality of the public mind has worked this happy and salutary change in the opinions of men, who were always estimable for their talents, and the sincerity of their hearts, though unfortunately, by looking through a false medium, their views of state policy and the welfare of nations were warped on the wrong side.

“There is no doubt that men have been brought to live in working communities, and have prospered in them; but the question is, whether they require for their success a combination of circumstances which rarely occur together, or whether the necessary elements can be commonly collected and combined. This is the great prac-

tical question; the desideratum is, a remedy for every-day evils of society. The practicability of such schemes, as a mere question of finance, if the industry, frugality, and good conduct of the members could be depended upon, there can be no doubt about. If it had never been proved before, it has lately been shown to demonstration, by the success of the settlement at Frederick's Oord. The success of this and other settlements in the Netherlands has been so complete, that it is surprising no attempt has been made to introduce the same plan into England. If the object were to administer the parish rates so as to attain the very minimum of success, the managers could not succeed better than they do at present in this country. We throw out the same hint to the directors of the Refuge for the Destitute. With such funds, the question might soon be settled, and perhaps an important improvement in the management of the poor, one of the greatest of our national wants, be introduced into this country. If any doubts were entertained about the accuracy of Mr. Jacob's account of these establishments, the Netherlands are near, and a committee of two or three inquisitive, accurate, right-headed, unsanguine gentlemen, might soon see things for themselves, and bring home conclusive information on the subject.

“It is well known that working communities have been

formed with success by Moravian teachers, in Hottentot villages at the Cape of Good Hope. * * * One of the strongest examples of a successful working community is the Society of Harmony. * * * Another working community, which has been successful in the United States, are the people called Shakers, from the grotesque nature of their religious ceremonies.

“There is another community, never yet noticed in print, of which we have received the following account from one who visited it. A number of persons emigrated together from Europe, meaning to form a settlement near each other. On arriving at Pennsylvania their funds were exhausted, and they were enabled to go forward only by the liberality of some Quakers; they formed a settlement near Wheeling, on the Ohio. They purchased land, and divided it into as many portions as there were families. It was then proposed that each should take possession of his portion, build his own house, and till his own ground. Till this could be done, they built a large house for common accommodation, and cleared a piece of land for common support. When they had accomplished this, it was proposed by some of the influential people, that as they had lived together so long with mutual comfort and satisfaction, it would be as well to continue the same plan, which had thus been *proved* to be advantageous, instead of dividing their interests and property. This they did; and in 1827, they were a true working community, their labour, capital,

and produce being in common, and with every mark of prosperity about them.

For several years there has been a society in London for the express purpose of encouraging the formation of working communities among the labouring classes. They have held meetings, made speeches, and published a monthly paper under the title of ‘The Co-operative Magazine,’ but nothing practicable had been effected, at least nothing successfully, till about two years and a half ago, when a few intelligent and industrious workmen at Brighton formed themselves into a club which they called the ‘Brighton Co-operative Society.’ They held meetings in a room which they hired for the purpose, and never at a public-house; this was one of their chief rules; *they* too published their monthly paper, consisting only of four pages, price one penny. Besides this they entered into a weekly subscription: when this had accumulated to a sufficient amount, instead of investing it in a Savings’ Bank, where it would have produced a small interest and increased slowly, they employed it in trade,—purchasing the goods generally wanted by the members at the wholesale price, selling them at the retail price both to the members and to the public, and adding the profit to their capital. It is the progress of this little community which we propose to communicate to our readers, and which we have learnt partly from personal observation, and partly from the publications issued by this society, and others totally unknown beyond these societies

themselves. They disclose reasonings and proceedings among this large portion of the population, which no thoughtful mind can contemplate without an interest quite disproportionate to the small beginnings which we shall have to describe: for, firstly, in the present case, it is not an enthusiast calling on the rich to subscribe towards a scheme for amending the condition of the poor, but the workmen themselves are the prime movers; and, secondly, the means required are within the power of the labouring classes in every town in this kingdom. We shall proceed as briefly as we can to give our readers a notion of the proceedings of these co-operators,—how they reason, what they propose for themselves and recommend to others, and above all, what they have done, and how far they have actually succeeded. They begin thus:—

“ ‘The rate of wages has been gradually diminishing for some hundred years, so that now it is not above one-third of what it used to be—but this is not all, for the same causes continuing to act, the wages must go on diminishing till a workman will not be able to maintain a family; and by the same rule, he will at last not be able to maintain himself. The independent day-labourer has almost ceased to exist. The country labourer, who can, in many respects, live cheaper than we can in a town—who can have his garden, and raise his own potatoes, &c., can now very seldom live without the parish aid; and it is a common rule to make an allowance for each child above a certain

number. The same situation has begun to beset the Mechanic. He is frequently obliged to go without work a day or two in the week, or to have his wages lowered. If this goes on he must also come to the parish.

“ ‘But parish relief does not cure the evil—for many have too much principle or pride to apply; and many are deterred, sometimes by living at a distance, and sometimes by the opposition and frowns they meet with: so that there are many families after all, who, though they do not starve, yet live constantly upon short allowance, and many days do not put victuals into their mouths.’

“ ‘In manufacturing districts they are frequently overtaken by the horrors of a famine, not from a failure of the crops, but from a failure of employment, of which Manchester, Kidderminster, and Spitalfields afford recent examples. But putting aside these occasional distresses, the mass of the working population are, as society is at present constituted, placed in circumstances which preclude the possibility of attaining an independence, however small, for themselves in case of sickness or age, and if they die, for their wives and children. Hard work for a long day, and a long week, with no time for innocent enjoyments, and for that improvement of the mind which would teach them to prefer innocent to vicious pleasures, and so on through the whole active period of their lives, is barely sufficient to procure them common necessities; to succeed thus far is their best lot. They have no hope of rising above it into independence,

and myriads sink below it into wretchedness. But misery produces crime, and the most severe and sanguinary laws are insufficient to suppress it. A hungry stomach, starving children, and in winter a cold hearth, are stronger temptations than the fear of punishment can counteract.

“And this is the lot of those who fabricate all the wealth of the country. ‘The labour of every nation,’ says Adam Smith, ‘is the fund which originally supplies it with all the necessaries and conveniences which it consumes.’ But the labourers, those from whose hands issue all wealth, are themselves left with empty hands; those who grow all the corn, make all the clothes, build all the houses which we see, are the worst fed, the worst clothed, and the worst housed part of the community; those who contribute hands and arms, and skill and knowledge, and the almost incessant employment of these to the production of wealth—their lot is poverty; they whose hands and arms, and skill and knowledge are not exerted—their lot is plenty, independence, ease, and often wealth.

“When the discovery was made that machines could be contrived which would increase to an incredible degree the productiveness of labour, so that one man could produce as much as formerly required hundreds or thousands, a simple person, who knew nothing of the mechanism of society, of the connection between the working classes and those by whom they are employed, and the way in which the former are rewarded for their toil—such a person might

naturally expect that the discovery of machinery would be the happiest of all possible events for the working classes: it is they who have discovered the machines in most cases, and have fabricated them in all; and it might be reasonably expected that these lifeless but industrious children of their ingenuity would become their useful slaves, who would work for them, lighten their labour, and increase their abundance. But, whatever the ultimate result may be—and we, for our part, doubt not that will be good—the consequence to the existing generation has been very different; instead of serving them as the fairies did Crispin in the German tale, who had only to cut out his shoes at night, and he was sure to find them made the next morning, machines have served them like the monster in Frankenstein, who, when life was given him, used it only to persecute the giver. Machines, instead of being their servants, have become their most formidable competitors.

“‘Labour,’ says one of these co-operative pamphleteers, ‘is working against machinery. Those that eat, drink, and get families, are working against those that do not eat, drink, or get families. In such a contest, the eater and drinker must be worsted. He cannot be put in a garret, and kept without food, till he is wanted. He cannot be laid up for the winter. The birth of new labourers cannot be deferred, like the production of new machines, till their labour is called for. They cannot be put together one day, and pulled to pieces another day. They

come forth with new faces every day, and still there is a greater troop behind. As the waves that break upon the shore never exhaust the great body of the deep; so the womb of futurity contains more myriads of germs than there are drops of water in the mighty fathomless ocean.'

"The application of machinery to manufactures, instead of being a blessing to the existing generation of the labouring classes, brought on them a new evil, called over-production; the machines which had been almost always contrived, and were of course always fabricated by them, became the property of their masters, and worked for these, not for the labourers. By the combination of labour and machinery, the master manufacturer was enabled to produce as many goods as he did formerly, with a small number of workmen, and thus was enabled and induced to discharge hands; or, if he continued to employ as many, these, by the aid of machinery, produced such a superabundance of goods, that the master manufacturer could not sell them: for a time, therefore, he ceased to produce them, and during the season of non-production, paid off a crowd of workmen: thus either at first, or ultimately, the employment of machinery in manufactures diminished the demand for labour, and the consequences were low wages, diminished employment, and sometimes none at all, with its attendant horrors.

"The benefits which the co-operators hope to derive from these associations, if they should ever reach the highest stage of

success, are, 1st., A perfect emancipation from all fear of poverty; a sure provision for themselves, not only in health and activity, but in sickness and age, and for their families after their death. 2d. A sufficient supply of the comforts of life, without that hard and incessant labour which now wears them out prematurely. 3d. Leisure for innocent enjoyment, the acquisition of knowledge, and the cultivation of their minds: in fine, great and lasting improvement in not only their physical, but their moral and intellectual condition. Such are their views and hopes; and, assuredly, hard grinding poverty is not the school of virtue, at least during school time. He who escapes from it and feels secure that it will never return, may sympathize with those who are still subject to this bitter tuition; but while he is suffering himself, with no prospect of escape, it is more likely to generate selfishness and the bad passions of our nature. Craving wants are as sure to injure our dispositions as to excite our understandings. Even among the middling and higher classes, those who have to make their way in the world by their talents, are far more liable to envy, hatred, and malice, than those who are born to affluence; and Austin, the keeper of the menagerie near Waterloo Bridge, found that if beasts of prey were kept so well fed as not to know the sense of hunger, the cat would live with the rat and the mouse, and the hawk with the sparrow—in the same cage in peace and playfulness.

"If these associations suc-

ceed, their influence on the rest of society must, to a certain extent, be beneficial. At present, the working classes are in a state of perpetual hostility with their massers, and may be said in the *trade union clubs* to keep a standing treasury for carrying on the war. They lean oppressively on the rest of society in the shape of poor rates, voluntary charity, and those vast subscriptions that are sometimes called for when want of employment overwhelms them in multitudes;—and their distresses are continually urging them to crime. Wherever the poor form themselves into successful co-operative communities, these evils must cease; they will no longer quarrel with their masters, for they will have no masters to quarrel with; they will need no assistance from the parish, and they will have no temptation to invade the property of others. A man who is fed, clothed, and employed, will hardly turn house-breaker, and risk his neck for a community. Their influence must be anti-revolutionary; all those concerned in them will have a something at stake; and consequently a motive for preserving the peace and order of society. Besides, the object of these societies is the same as that of the legislature; namely, to take labourers out of the market, and place them in circumstances in which they shall want neither employment nor relief. Thus far the influence of these associations must be beneficial both to the members and to the nation; but are they likely to produce any counterbalancing evils?

“ If they should ever become so numerous as to absorb the greater part of the working population (a very improbable supposition), the manufacturer, and all those who employ workmen, and whose prosperity depends on the profits of capital, may find a difficulty in procuring hands, excepting at wages which they would call exorbitant. How far this might go it is impossible to anticipate; if it went no further than to give the labourer a more ample maintenance, to compel the capitalist to be satisfied with smaller profits, and diminish the excessive inequality of condition among men, this effect would be numbered, not among the evils, but among the benefits effected by these associations, excepting by those who consider the working classes as born only for their service. Another evil which will be apprehended from the extension of these communities, is their interference with the present retail traders. If every town had in its suburbs a bazaar of co-operative shops, supplying all the articles required for the consumption of the towns-people, it would materially interfere with the independent shop-keepers—particularly as the co-operators, from their superior education, would be likely to excel these in skill, and, by working for themselves, would be able to undersell them in price. But this effect must inevitably be slow; the present generation would scarcely feel it; and as to the next, as they gradually come into employment, they will betake themselves, we may suppose, to those modes of living in which there may appear the

fairest prospect of a maintenance. The co-operators would seem to have as fair a right to these niches in society as those who are unborn.

“These societies are all of them of too recent establishment to allow of our forming any judgment at present concerning their future progress and ultimate effects. Whether co-operation will make a stir among the working classes for a few years only, and then die away and be heard of no more; or whether it will increase and multiply throughout the island; what influence, finally, supposing them to succeed, this new organization of society among the working classes would have on the aristocracies of capital and rank—all these are questions which we are not far-sighted enough

to determine with the naked eye, and we have no telescope through which we can see clearly. The political economists will, of course, point their glasses at the distance, and calculate the result with unfailing certainty; but we have no faith in the reports of these political stargazers. We leave them to prophesy, contenting ourselves with the humbler task of watching the progress and awaiting the issue of the experiment. It is at present in its infancy—a cloud no bigger than a man’s hand. Whether it is to dissipate in heat, or gradually spread over the land, and send down refreshing showers on this parched and withered portion of society, God only knows, and time only can reveal.”

DR. CHANNING ON ASSOCIATIONS.

Few persons who are at all interested in the Literature of America can have failed to hear of Dr. Channing. No man who venerates just and benevolent principles, who recognizes virtue as the basis and great support of private and public freedom, or who admires nervous and manly eloquence, can read the works of this admirable man without paying him the tribute of a sincere esteem. In a tract of his, lately reprinted in this country, by a spirited and sincere friend of co-operation, we find some very powerful remarks on the advantages of associations, which for the benefit of our readers we extract:

“The value of associations is

to be measured by the energy, the freedom, the activity, the moral power which they encourage and diffuse. In truth, the great object of all benevolence is, to give power, activity, and freedom to others. We have here, we think, the great consideration to guide us in judging of associations. Those are good which communicate power, moral and intellectual action, and the capacity of useful efforts, to the persons who form them, or to the persons on whom they act; on the other hand, associations which in any degree impair or repress the free and full action of men’s power, are so far hurtful. On this principle, associations which are designed to

awaken the human mind, to give to men of all classes a consciousness of their intellectual powers, to communicate knowledge of a useful and quickening character, to encourage men in thinking with freedom and vigour, to inspire an ardent love and pursuit of truth, are most worthy of patronage; whilst such as are designed or adapted to depress the human intellect, to make it dependent and servile, to keep it where it is, to give a limited amount of knowledge, but not to give impulse and an onward motion to men's thoughts—all

such associations should be regarded as among the foes and obstructions to the best interests of society. On the same principle, associations aiming to purify and ennoble the character of a people, to promote true virtue, a rational piety, a disinterested charity, a wise temperance, and especially aiming to accomplish those ends by the only effectual means, that is by calling forth men's own exertions for a higher knowledge of God and duty, and for a new and growing control over themselves, such institutions are among the noblest."

CO-OPERATIVE LITERARY ANNOUNCEMENTS.

An entire and corrected edition of Miss Wright's eloquent and interesting Lectures has been received from America, and will be reprinted in London in the course of a month.

Messrs. Southey, Wordsworth, Campbell, Coleridge, and Moore, Malthus, M'Culloch, and Mill. The shade of Brutus is represented as appearing to the Irish absentees at Rome.

The forthcoming Poem of "The Reproof of Brutus," by the Author of "The Revolt of the Bees," will contain distinct appeals on the state of the country—to the ministers, Sir Francis Burdett, Messrs. Hume, Horton, and Sadler, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, Sir Walter Scott,

A society for the diffusion of co-operative principles, and for the collection of all works on that subject, as well as for the delivery of lectures, and for private discussion, we are happy to hear, is in course of formation in London. Its title will be the "Metropolitan Co-operative Book Society."

It is requested that information upon all subjects connected with Co-operation, and all correspondence, will be sent (post free), addressed to the Editor, 4, York Street, Covent Garden.